

## CBS EVENING NEWS

19 December 1984

CP13|SPACE SHUTTLE|RATHER: In his commentary tonight, Bill Moyers notes  
|3|that the new mixing of fight over top secret with the high  
ground of space can be traced not just to an issue but to  
a time when space, the final frontier, became space, the  
final battleground. Bill?

MOYERS: Dan, it's hard to see what the flap is all about. Even officials of the Defense Department admit that little information about military cargo and space shuttles could be kept from the Russians if secrecy is imposed. Those Soviet spies, posing as fishermen on trawlers off the coast of Florida, aren't going to think the shuttle rising from Cape Canaveral is a new ride at Disney World. And those Soviet sensors, which keep track of the flight from high in space and relay instant data to the Kremlin, they don't subscribe to the Washington Post or, I'm sorry to say, even watch the evening news. The Soviets know what floats up there above Moscow, and we know what they've put in our skies. That's actually a good thing. The more each side knows what the other knows, the less chance there is for miscalculation. Why, then, all the fuss? Well, when the secretary of Defense says publication of a story is contrary to the national security, news executives get nervous. They're citizens, too, and no citizen wants to give aid and comfort to an enemy. But this story flunks the test of common sense. How can you give aid and comfort to the enemy when he already knows through his own devices? Remember, this story came from government sources in the first place. Reporters didn't crawl over Caspar Weinberger's transom in the middle of the night and steal classified documents to get it. They were told it, and some were told it by officials in the Pentagon. This happens all the time. Officials leak for their own sake, to stir up public support, to influence Congress, to whack a bureaucratic adversary, to send a message to Moscow, you name it. Unless there's a war going on, journalists can't be blamed for raising an eyebrow when suddenly the Pentagon shouts, 'national security, national security,' about something that's been going on as long as space shots from Cape Canaveral. There's another story in all this--the space program ain't what it used to be. As long as it was the peaceful servant of science, it was public theater, it took place right there in your living room. Walter Cronkite was the Buck Rogers of broadcasting, our surrogate starship commander guiding us vicariously into space. The government wanted to make a show of it because taxpayers were footing the bill. The more impressive the spectacle, the more awestruck the public and the more the Congress was generous with your taxes. But those days are ending. The space program is going to be dominated now by the military. Goodbye, public. Hello, top secret. And you know what that means--no more debate, no more dissent. The stars become warships while on Earth, we're left waiting in the dark. Dan?